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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	East Germany	REPORT		25X1
SUBJECT	Minister Fritz Selbmann's Views on Power Production	DATE DISTR.	8 February 1954	
		NO. OF PAGES	2	
DATE OF INFO.				25X1
PLACE ACQUIRED		REFERENCES		

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1. In October 1953, the hitherto independent State Secretariats for Coal and Power were returned to the Ministry for Heavy Industry as main departments (Hauptverwaltungen). They therefore returned to their former status and once more became the responsibility of Minister Fritz Selbmann, who, to mark the occasion, gave a long, mainly political speech to the power meeting (Energietagung) in Leipzig on 13 November 1953. The assembly consisted principally of senior electrical engineers and power station managers.
2. Selbmann opened his two hour speech by reviewing the power consumption situation in East Germany. He stated that, at the moment, the power consumption of East Germany was 1200 M.W. per hour. This amount was between 350 and 400 M.W. short, which deficit must somehow or other be overcome. Those of the assembled electrical engineers who had then hoped to hear some sensible scheme for increased production, were disappointed. Selbmann left the economic plane, and the remainder of his speech was purely political.
3. The lacking 350 to 400 M.W. could easily be saved, he went on, by each household not using more than 100 W per hour during hours of darkness. Consumers must be warned to economize, and he felt sure that in the interests of East Germany and its political system, they would willingly accept this sacrifice. To make sure that they did, he gave rough details of a scheme whereby each area was to be given a quota, and once this quota had been consumed, no further power would be supplied to this area until the next quota period began. To ensure that essential industry received its necessary supply, each industrial firm would be given a priority number. The firms with higher priority numbers would always receive their full requirements, whereas those with lower numbers would also experience cuts during peak periods.
4. Selbmann had previously ordered that the work on the Trattendorf III power station be pushed ahead with all possible speed, but he did not mention new power stations in his speech on 13 November 1953; and, in fact, made no mention of any planned increase in production whatsoever. Since Trattendorf III will not be ready until

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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1956, and no definite completion dates can be given for installations in progress at Stalinstadt, Calbe, Vockerode, Lauta and Breitscheid, increased production did not seem to enter into Selbmann's calculations.

5. After Selbmann's speech, the assembly dispersed. There was no applause nor open discussion. Discussions which took place in small groups of electrical engineers largely centered on two points:
 - a. the quotas visualized by Selbmann for each area were too low and would be impractical to impose.
 - b. the only solution to the power production problem was a new plant, and it did not appear as if Selbmann intended to do much about the procurement thereof.

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